



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# Monatshefte

für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik.

(Früher: *Pädagogische Monatshefte*.)

## A MONTHLY

DEVOTED TO THE STUDY OF GERMAN AND PEDAGOGY.

Organ des

Nationalen Deutschamerikanischen Lehrerbundes

---

**Jahrgang XVI.**

**April 1915.**

**Heft 4.**

---

### **The Teachers' Course in German with Special Reference to Phonetics.\***

---

By **Professor Chas. M. Purin, Ph. D.**, University of Wisconsin.

---

With the gradual organization of educational departments in our colleges and universities, the training of secondary teachers has become an issue of prominence with those responsible for the policies of our public education.

Considering the fact that the first chair in education was established only three and a half decades ago,<sup>1</sup> it must be admitted that much has been accomplished in the elaboration of courses offered and in their adjustment to the needs of our secondary schools.

The modern language departments in our colleges and universities have been equally zealous to contribute their share towards the solution of this problem, which is growing more complex as the curricula of the secondary schools become more diversified through the introduction of new subjects.

---

\* Paper delivered before the German Section of the Modern Language Association, Minneapolis, Dec. 30, 1914.

<sup>1</sup> The first chair in education was established in Michigan in 1879; Columbia followed in 1882. In Missouri and Iowa unsuccessful attempts to establish such chairs were made before 1870.

*Hinsdale*: History of University of Michigan, 1906, p. 83 ff.

The high school of today is an amphibium: On the one hand, it strives to serve the immediate needs of the community by providing a training of direct vocational value; on the other, it seeks to prepare students for college by maintaining courses in which the cultural features decidedly overshadow the purely utilitarian tendencies.

This accounts for the dualism in aims and ambitions regarding the methods to be employed as well as the final results to be achieved.

In modern foreign language work the utilitarian tendencies have, in a degree, become manifest in the clamor that the students acquire a speaking knowledge of the language taught. We need only to examine the literature on modern foreign language teaching for the last five years.<sup>2</sup>

This dualism of purpose in the present day high school accounts to some extent for the severe criticism to which the teaching of modern foreign languages in general and, for reasons of its wider extent, the teaching of German in particular, has been subjected in recent years.

We have been told by denizens of rustic communities that the study of foreign languages is an academic luxury designed solely to satisfy the college entrance requirements; that it is a non-practical subject and, for that reason, should be supplanted by a practical training in agriculture, manual arts, domestic science and what not. In towns with mercantile aspirations a course in the commercial subjects has been urged in preference.

With regard to German it has been claimed by our fellow-citizens of non-German extraction that the only reason for having German taught in their schools was to accede to the demands for such instruction on the part of the German element in their township.

Not infrequently the argument has been advanced that for high schools the study of a modern foreign language is not really worth while, since the tangible results obtained from our high school courses in French or German are in no way commensurate to the time and energy devoted to the subject.

It has been further maintained that an insight into foreign life and culture can be equally well gained through English translations, without going through the cumbersome and time wasting process of foreign language study.

Criticisms of this nature, most of which are made on purely utilitarian grounds, clearly show that those who offer them are decidedly ignorant as to the real significance and value of foreign language study. It be-

---

<sup>2</sup> A concise statement of the present day tendencies in modern language teaching in this country will be found in Bagster-Collins' "Modern Languages," cf. Monroe's "Principles of Secondary Education," Macmillan, N. Y., 1914, p. 424 ff. For a treatment of the "Direct Method" see Carl Krause's "Über die Reformmethode in America", Elwert, Marburg, 1913.

comes, therefore, not only advisable but imperative that those of us who are entrusted with the training of teachers of modern foreign languages should equip our students with the arguments that may be advanced in favor of this important discipline.<sup>3</sup>

It is not my purpose to engage in the defense of foreign language work at this time. I merely wish to quote the opinion of an English educator with reference to one point, viz. the assertion that a full understanding of the life and culture of a foreign nation can equally well be obtained through English translations. He denies this contention as follows:

"A foreign language provides, — —, the key that unlocks the literary treasure-house of the nation that speaks it, and it is the only key that fits. A good translation will always suffice to convey adequately enough for practical purposes the thought contained in a foreign masterpiece, whether prose or poetry, but what makes a literary work of art is not the thought alone, but also the quality of the form in which it is cast.— Speaking generally—it is as impossible to render into an alien tongue what is called the genius of the language as it would be to convert a typical member of the London police force into a typical French *sergeant de ville* by putting a *képi* on his head, a sword at his side, and cutting his hair *en brosse*. The explanation lies not so much in the fact that the sum of the meanings of a word in one language, and consequently its associations, may only partly coincide with those of the corresponding word in another, but rather in the nature of speech itself. Speech consists primarily of sounds, and it is upon the rhythmic qualities of the sounds that the beauty of a verse or of a prose period chiefly depends. A translation, therefore, though it may be a work of art equal to or even greater than the original, differs from the latter just as a great musical composition played on the piano differs from the same rendered by an orchestra. And this difference

<sup>3</sup> The following publications contain chapters dealing with the value of modern foreign language work:

Report of the Committee of Twelve, Heath & Co.

Report of the Committee of Nine, Madison, Wis., State Superintendent's Office, 1905.

Kirkman, F. B.: The Teaching of Foreign Languages. London, Clive, 1909, pp. 2 and 3.

Bagster-Collins: German in Secondary Schools. Columbia University Press, N. Y., 1910, pp. 6—15.

Memoranda on Teaching and Organization in Secondary Schools. Circular No. 797, London Board of Education. London, Wyman & Sons, 1912, p. 8.

Additional bibliographies on this question will be found in Karl Breul's "The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages and the Training of Teachers." Cambridge (England), University Press, 1909, p. 4.

is accentuated when the translation is inferior. For the piano we have then to substitute a penny whistle." <sup>4</sup>

The chief fallacy of the opponents of modern language instruction consists in the fact that they overlook entirely the intellectual and linguistic training, *den rein formalen, nicht-stofflichen Gewinn* which, to be sure, in the scale of educational values cannot be represented quantitatively or optically.

Our opponents overlook, furthermore, the fact that any language, being the exponent of the thought and sentiments of an entire nation, is not "an isolated fact stranded on the shores of oblivious times," nor a conglomerate of facts or data which can be gathered into a volume and committed to memory, but a most subtle and complicated texture, of which the individual threads frequently change in color and shade as centuries pass on and one generation is supplanted by another.

It is apparent that to study such a discipline to advantage will require considerably more time than the study of purely informational subjects such as History or Geography, for example.

In Germany and France the amount of time devoted to the study of modern foreign languages is, in cognizance of this fact, considerably greater than in our country.

Aside from the very limited amount of time there are other prohibitive factors which will have to be eliminated from our educational system if we ever hope to obtain better results in this field, viz.:

1. The inadequate preparation of teachers owing to low standards of certification.
2. The antiquated methods still prevailing in a considerable number of schools.
3. The low salaries paid to teachers in general so that first class teachers are available only for the larger institutions.
4. The lack of inspection of modern language work in our high schools by experienced school men whose assistance would be beneficial particularly to new teachers.
5. Lastly, the certification of teachers by state authorities *in toto* and not by subjects, which enables even poorly prepared teachers of modern languages to obtain positions on the strength of their Normal or College diplomas.

The foremost reason why the results of teaching modern foreign languages in our secondary schools have not realized the expectations are the poorly prepared teachers.

---

<sup>4</sup> Kirkman, F. B.: *The Teaching of Foreign Languages. Principles and Methods.* University Tutorial Press, 157 Drury Lane, W. C. London, Clive, 1909, pp. 2 and 3.

As will be shown later, the amount of preparation required of the prospective teachers of German (or French) in most of our colleges and universities is utterly inadequate to insure successful work on the part of the candidates.

In order to be acceptably prepared to teach German in a secondary school, the student, in addition to a two year course in the high school, should devote *at least* 33 semester hours to the study of German in college. These 33 hours of college German might be distributed as follows:

- 8 hours of advanced reading in modern and classical German authors, with grammar work by topics, some composition exercises, and a careful training in translation of especially selected passages in the text treated, i. e. the work in translation ought to be intensive, not extensive. A goodly portion of the time should be made available for oral drill and reproduction in German.
- 12 hours in special literary courses, preferably 3 in novel, 3 in drama and 6 in general outline of German literature.
- 6 hours in Composition, oral and written, with special emphasis on "*freie Aufsätze*".
- 2 hours in conversation on topics dealing with every day activities and German "*Realien*".
- 2 hours in History of the German language.
- 3 hours in the course on methods. One half of the time in this course should deal with the organization of courses, selection of texts, discussion of methods of presentation; the other half ought to be devoted to a practical training in phonetics.

In addition to this we should require of all students intending to teach German a course in the history of Europe with especial emphasis on the history of Germany, including its geographical features.

Further, no candidate ought to be granted a license to teach unless he has demonstrated his ability to handle both subject and classes in a satisfactory manner. Provision for observation and practice work is, therefore, an indispensable prerequisite with every institution which attempts to train teachers for secondary schools.

All of the courses outlined above should be conducted as far as possible, and some of them entirely, in German, in order to give the student that fluency in speaking the foreign tongue which he seldom secures where English is the predominant medium of class room instruction.

A speaking knowledge of German is considered necessary for the high school teacher of that language, because it gives him a feeling of certainty and confidence in the conduct of his class, particularly with reference to oral work in German.

Oral work, in turn, ought to be stressed in the high school, not because we want to give the pupils primarily a speaking knowledge of German, but rather for pedagogical reasons, viz.:

1. It is an additional means for training in pronunciation and intonation.
2. It is the best means of fixing the pupil's vocabulary through repeated and diverse application of the words in sentences.
3. It makes the instruction live and interesting—a factor of great importance in the teaching of any subject.

Let us now see in how far our colleges and universities meet the tentative requirements as they have been outlined above.

Owing to the diverse and—for the outsider at least—often incomprehensible methods of designation of courses and still more to the indefinite nature and scope of the electives in some colleges and universities, it is not possible to determine from the catalogues of these institutions the exact preparation which prospective teachers of German may obtain there.

Approximately the following conditions seem to prevail: Out of 36 state and 22 private colleges and universities—representing the largest and best equipped institutions—15 require 20 to 30 hours of college German for a teacher's certificate; of these 6 require 30 to 40 hours, and one requires more than 40 semester hours; in other words, only 25.8% of the 58 colleges and universities send out teachers of German who would seem to be fairly well prepared for their chosen vocation, if we are to judge simply by the amount of training prescribed which, of course, is not always an infallible standard of measurement.

As regards the teachers' course, i. e. a course in methods, such a course—ranging from one to four semester hours in length—is offered in 27 out of the 58 colleges and universities.

In addition to these there are three private and five state institutions offering courses *intended for teachers of German* (such as grammar reviews and advanced composition and conversation courses), in which the question of methods of presentation and high school instruction is considered, but surely can not be dealt with in a very satisfactory manner, especially since no provision is made for either observation or practice teaching on the part of the candidates.

The matter of practice teaching is, by the way, one of the most neglected features in the scheme of training for secondary teachers.<sup>5</sup> "We have tried to teach our students to swim by a thorough drill in the principles of buoyancy and aquatics, but we have refused to give them a swimming pool where they might try to see if they could prove the worth of these principles."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Farrington: *Observation and Practice Work*. Report of the Nat. Society of College Teachers of Education, 1909.

<sup>6</sup> *Obs. and Pract. Work*, p. 11.

It may be argued that our normal schools might be the proper institutions for the training of high school teachers, since they do possess the facilities for the desired practical work. As far as modern foreign languages are concerned, however, the training received by the students there is, for the present at least, very inadequate, and "there is no immediate prospect that the normal schools will be able to take up in any general way the work of training high school teachers."<sup>7</sup>

It is obvious, therefore, that our secondary schools must depend upon the college and the university for the supply of properly prepared teachers. It is a poor policy on the part of these institutions to treat this question as a side issue, for after all the work of our own students depends in a large measure upon the degree of efficiency of high school training.

That our colleges and universities are beginning to recognize the importance of the question of the training of modern foreign language teachers for secondary schools is evidenced by the fact that a committee has been appointed by this association (chairman Professor A. R. Hohlfeld) which is to present a comprehensive report together with a workable solution of this problem.

It will have been noticed that in my tentative outline of courses for teachers of German the knowledge of phonetics was placed last. That should not, however, be interpreted to mean that this discipline is of comparatively little consequence for the prospective teacher of German. On the contrary, I should consider it of prime importance. One of the main arguments in support of this contention is that ill-pronounced German creates in the minds of the students incorrect sound associations which hinder their progress in the oral and written reproduction.

The sound perceptions of such students are blurred instead of being clarified. There is no comparative standard of sound differentiation created and the appreciation of clear and distinct enunciation is lost forever. "The unfortunates who are allowed to become fluent in ill-pronounced French or German never recover;—the only compensation is that they themselves are mercifully unconscious of the suffering which their vocal atrocities inflict upon others."<sup>8</sup>

Whether the method employed in modern language teaching be direct or indirect—in other words, whether we study the *language* or study *about* the language, whether the purpose of language teaching be to give the student reading ability only or both reading and speaking ability, in the initial stages of the instruction a thorough drill in pronunciation should unquestionably be taken up.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the Commissioner of Education, Vol. I, 1913, p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> Preliminary statement of the Committee on Modern Foreign Languages in "Reorganization of Secondary Education." Bulletin No. 41, 1913. U. S. Bureau of Education.



But while a number of our high school pupils may be able to acquire a fairly correct pronunciation by the process of imitation—by the so-called *Vorsprechen und Nachsprechen*—a method widely employed by the French *maîtres* or the *Sprachmeister* in the middle ages, with a large percentage of our students—particularly the older ones—this process, aside from being tedious and time-wasting, will prove quite inefficient.

The chief difficulty lies in the fact that students are constantly endeavoring to substitute English sounds for German, and unless the teacher possesses the exact knowledge of the basis and form of articulation of both, in other words, unless he has a knowledge of Phonetics, he will be unable to assist the students materially in overcoming their difficulties.

Jespersen says with regard to this particular point:

„Wer auf diese Weise eine fremde Sprache gelernt hat, (i. e. by process of imitation) <sup>9</sup> wird kein guter Lehrer dieser Sprache sein, weil er von den Schwierigkeiten, mit denen seine Schüler zu kämpfen haben, keine Vorstellung besitzt, und weil er ihnen keine Mittel und Wege zur Ueberwindung dieser Schwierigkeiten anweisen kann. Wird dagegen die Uebung im Nachahmen ungewohnter Laute durch die Einsicht dessen unterstützt, worin der Unterschied zwischen diesen und den gewohnten Lauten besteht, so haftet der Laut vor allem fester und kann in Bedarfsfällen, selbst wenn man ihn seit langer Zeit nicht von Einheimischen gehört hat, leichter immer wieder hervorgerufen werden; ferner ist die Beherrschung nicht auf eine einzelne Person beschränkt, sondern lässt sich auch andern mitteilen. Für den Lehrer vollends müssen phonetische Theorie und phonetische Praxis immer Hand in Hand gehen.“

The introduction of Phonetics for class-room purposes does not necessarily mean that the pupils are going to study Phonetics as a theoretical science—it means that we want them to understand some of the simplest phenomena in the process of sound articulation and to be able, after a comparatively short time, to recognize and correct their own mistakes. I beg to quote here from one of our leading modern language men who in a round table address before the N. E. A. in Chicago, 1912, strongly emphasized the importance of Phonetics for class-room instruction.

He says, “To teach a foreign language without pronouncing it constantly, carefully, consciously, is a childish undertaking.

Gifted people *can* attain an excellent, correct, and fluent pronunciation of a foreign language without any instruction in phonetics. No one can doubt that. But only *few* are gifted in that direction; every high school teacher's experience will bear that out. With the majority, endless repetition and correction on the part of the patient teacher are necessary

<sup>9</sup> Elementarbuch der Phonetik. Teubner, Berlin, 1912, p. 7.

to make at least a decent pronunciation possible. But that very necessity of unceasing correction will for a long time be a source of uncertainty and confusion to the pupil if the teacher limits himself to correction without stating the reason. To state reasons in pronunciation, however, means to teach phonetics.—In our grammar teaching we often exaggerate the desirability of stating our reasons for corrections; in matters of pronunciation, many of us are apt not to state any reasons at all.

If phonetics is to be made use of in teaching, it should be taught at the very outset—simply, but systematically and carefully. Even though the speaker believes that in the first year of language teaching the mother-tongue should not be used in the class-room, he would except from this the first four weeks, which ought to be devoted to phonetics. In these four weeks the pupil should not be spared the difficult information that he possesses a tongue, two lips and rows of teeth, a palate, and even two vocal chords; he should become familiar with their chief functions in speaking so that he may not “remain a stranger in the magic world that is concealed in man’s oral cavity”: it is not even a grave misfortune if, per chance, he should learn about four phonetic terms: stop and spirant, voiced and voiceless. Together with systematic drill in pronunciation, this will be sufficient for the first four weeks. After that, during the whole remainder of German instruction, corrections of pronunciation need no longer be mere statements of facts, but the pupils can justly be expected to make the necessary corrections themselves.”<sup>10</sup>

The importance of Phonetics in the teaching of modern foreign languages is duly recognized in most of the European countries, particularly in case of adult students.<sup>11</sup> In the United States thirteen out of the 58 colleges and universities mentioned offer regular courses in Phonetics, but only in four instances is such a course required of those preparing to teach. In six institutions Phonetics constitute a part of some other course, but again only two colleges require it for the teacher’s certificate.

<sup>10</sup> *Prokosch, E.*: The Place of Phonetics in High School German. Addresses and Proceedings of the National Educational Association, 1912, p. 733 ff. Cf. also the statement by Bagster-Collins in the chapter on modern languages as mentioned on p. 2 of this article. An interesting discussion of phonetic instruction will be found in Bahlisen’s “The Teaching of Modern Languages,” Chapter III, and Brebner’s “The Method of Teaching Modern Languages in Germany,” Chapter III. See also the chapters on phonology in Leonard Bloomfield’s “An Introduction to the Study of Language” (Holt, 1914).

As to the ability of pupils to correct their own mistakes after a comparatively brief training in phonetics the writer witnessed a convincing demonstration at Leipzig in the practice school of Director Gaudig’s Lehrerinnenseminar and also at Frankfurt a/M. in Director Walter’s Musterschule.

It may be argued that in this country some of the modern foreign language teachers themselves consider phonetics as unnecessary for their work, maintaining that their students are able to get the pronunciation very nicely without it. My reply to this would be that they are not aware of the fact that their students would get even better results and in a briefer period of time with the help of phonetics. Usually we find that those who advance arguments of this sort have never had a phonetic training in the high school in the first place; second, they never were given the opportunity to study Phonetics in the college or, if such a course was offered, it was mainly theoretical in nature without consideration of and correlation to actual class-room conditions. The remedy would, accordingly, lie in the provision that Phonetics be made a requirement for all prospective teachers of modern foreign languages.

It matters little whether Phonetics is offered as a separate course or given as a part of the course on methods, provided that sufficient time be devoted to it and the work be so conducted as to apply to actual class-room conditions in our high schools.

A course in Phonetics intended for modern foreign language teachers in our secondary schools should, therefore, be more in the nature of applied or experimental phonetics. A few simple and inexpensive pieces of apparatus such as the laryngeal signal, the endoscope, a number of diapositives, a set of tuning forks, an auditory tube, Wilson's artificial palate, a hand mirror for each student, etc., could and should be used to illustrate a number of the most important elementary phonetic phenomena, thus making the course both objective and interesting.<sup>12</sup>

I am far from maintaining that even the most practical course in Phonetics will forever solve the difficulties besetting the modern language teacher, but I do maintain that it will be an effective aid in solving one of

---

<sup>11</sup> The prospectus for 1914 mentions the following places at which the elementary work of the Ferienkurse in the foreign language is conducted on a phonetic basis:

*In Germany:* Berlin, Freiburg, Hamburg, Marburg.

*In England:* London, Ramsgate.

*In France:* Bayeux et Granville, Boulogne sur Mer, Grenoble, Le Havre, Lisieux, Marseille, Rouen, Tours, Trouville-Deauville, Versailles, Paris. Similar courses are given in Geneva and even in Madrid, and Spanish certainly is as phonetic a language as German. (Ferienkurse 1914 im In- und Auslande, zusammengestellt von der Amtlichen Akademischen Auskunftsstelle der Universität Berlin. Berlin, Schade.)

<sup>12</sup> Suggestions for such apparatus will be found in "Einführung in die angewandte Phonetik", a manual issued by Dr. Panconcelli-Calzia, director of the phonetic laboratory in the Kolonial-Institut, Hamburg. Published by Fischer's Medizinische Buchhandlung, Berlin, 1914.

the chief difficulties, namely the teaching of pronunciation by establishing at the very beginning of the instruction—and that is where it is most needed—a corrective means more reliable than mere description or imitation. Both teachers as well as pupils in isolated communities will then have a real help and guide in Viètors Aussprachewörterbuch which, at present, without the knowledge of Phonetics, is practically useless to them.

---

*Literature.*

For bibliographical data on genetic as well as experimental phonetic the following publications should be consulted:

1. *Breyman*: Die phonetische Literatur von 1876—1895.
2. *Phonetische Studien*, Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche und praktische Phonetik, 1887—1893.
3. *Viètor*: Elemente der Phonetik (4th edition and ff.)
4. *Panconcelli-Calzia*: Bibliographia phonetica 1906—1908.
5. *Die neueren Sprachen*. A continuation of *Phonetische Studien*. Marburg, since 1893.
6. *Archiv für experimentelle und klinische Phonetik* von Latzenstein. Karger, Berlin, M. 24.
7. *Vox*: Internationales Zentralblatt der experim. Phonetik von Gutzmann und Panconcelli-Calzia. Fischers medicin. Buchhandlung, Berlin, M. 10.

Following are some of the more recent works on the physiological phases of sound production and experimental phonetics:

- Gutzmann*: Stimmbildung u. Stimmhygiene. Bergmann, Wiesbaden, 1912.
- Krüger, F.*: Beziehungen der experim. Phonetik zur Psychologie. Barth, Leipzig 1907.
- Krueger*: Mitbewegung beim Sprechen, Singen und Hören. Haertel & Breitskopf. Leipzig 1910.
- Marage*: Étude de vibrations de la voix. Paris, chez l'auteur. 1908.
- Panconcelli-Calzia*: Einführung in die angewandte Phonetik. Fischers medicin. Buchhandlung. Berlin 1914.
- Rosset, Theo.*: Recherches expérimentales pour l'inscription de la voix parlée. Paris, Colin, 1911.
- Rousselot*: Principes de phonétique expérimentale. 2 vols., 1897—1908. Paris.
- Rutz, O.*: Neue Entdeckungen von der menschlichen Stimme. Beck, München, 1908.
- Rutz, O.*: Sprache, Gesang und Körperhaltung. Beck, München, 1911.
- Rutz, O.*: Musik, Wort und Körper als Gemütsausdruck. Leipzig 1911.
- Scripture, E. W.*: The Elements of Experimental Phonetics. New York, 1904 (627 pages).
- Scripture, E. W.*: Researches of Experimental Phonetics. The Study of Speech Curves. Washington, 1906.
- Stievers, E.*: Neues zu den Rutzschen Reaktionen. Karger, Berlin. (Sonderabdruck aus Bd. I, Heft 3 des Archivs f. exp. u. klin. Phon.) 1914.
- Zünd-Burquet*: Méthode pratique, physiologique et comparée de prononciation française. Paris, 1902.